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## EURHYTHMIC

The revival of interest in interpretative or 'æsthetic' dancing has directed attention both to a method and to a subject of instruction that in modern times have been largely neglected. At first merely an attempt to remake the ballet or the solo dance into a more artistic form of expression, the general significance of rhythmic training as a background for musical expression, for bodily welfare, and for efficient and skilful performance in the various tasks of everyday life, is gradually making itself felt as a fundamental principle of education.

Eurhythmic, or instruction in rhythm for the purposes of a general improvement, is properly termed a revival, because, in studying the historic antecedents of this method and aim of education, we find it to have been the guiding principle among the ancient Greeks; an essential factor, indeed, in the educational procedures of all primitive men. As Plato has said, the whole of man's life stands in need of a right rhythm—*eurhythmia*.<sup>1</sup> His statement was intended neither as a metaphor nor as a pious hope, but was a simple expression of fact regarding educational practice as he knew it.

We may turn, then, to Greek education for an understanding of Eurhythmic in order to learn both its scope and its significance; for the view of the ancient Greeks is instructive, not only from the simple lucidity of its logic, but likewise for the intimacy of its contact with unartificial modes of life. Indeed, the universality of Greek thought rests in large measure upon the immediacy with which it engages the impulses of man's original nature. When, therefore, we learn that the essentials of Greek education were 'music' and 'gymnastic', we must free our minds of the restrictive connotation which these terms now have for us, and try to comprehend what they meant to a Greek.

'Music', for instance, refers to the *Muses*, the nine daughters of Zeus, and when we name them and note the different arts and sciences which they designate, we at once realize how much

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<sup>1</sup> *Protagoras*, 326

broader was the ancient connotation than is our own. Thus we find the following classification of the arts, over each of which a goddess presided:—

1. Epic poetry ..... Calliope
2. History ..... Clio
3. Erotic poetry ..... Erato
4. Lyric poetry ..... Euterpe
5. Tragedy ..... Melpomene
6. Eloquence ..... Polyhymnia
7. Dancing ..... Terpsichore
8. Comedy ..... Thalia
9. Astronomy ..... Urania

In our modern understanding no fewer than six of these nine fall more or less under the classification of literature, while history, dancing, and astronomy are several and quite diverse arts. How comes it that these nine were attributed to one mother, Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory? Probably because all studies are the children of memory; for by memory we learn, and whatever is favorable to memorization must perforce be methodologically appropriate. Although the method of an education is somewhat hidden in these designations of the Muses, the content of the studies comprised in the list is fairly obvious. At least it embraces linguistic, historical, mimetic, and numerical forms of interpretation. Yet to the Greek no one of these was clear-cut and distinct from the rest. History may be recorded in linguistic, mimetic, or dance forms, which may involve number in the rhythm and proportion both of their expressions and of the ideas which lie behind these expressions. Astronomy was but the art of celestial reference, more allusive than scientific, perhaps, although certain of its aspects were considered in numerical terms. Numbers were likewise found useful in drawing, although drawing had no Muse of its own, nor had painting, nor sculpture, nor architecture, in each of which the Greeks excelled. We see, accordingly, that a mnemonic pattern underlies all the activities of the Muses, whether they be verbal, numerical, or gymnastic.

In the *Politics*, Aristotle tells us that the subject-matter of education consists of (1) reading and writing; (2) gymnastic; (3) music; to which is sometimes added (4) drawing. Of these, reading, writing, and drawing were commonly regarded as

utilitarian, and hence did not share in the higher value which attaches to the cultivation of leisure—for leisure has a baneful effect, if it degenerates into a mere satisfaction of the desire to be pleased. Continuing this subject he writes:—

“Concerning music, a doubt may be raised. In our own day most men cultivate it for the sake of pleasure, but originally it was included in education, because nature herself, as has often been said, requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well; for, as I must repeat once and again, the first principle of all action is leisure. Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation; and therefore the question must be asked in good earnest, What ought we to do when at leisure? Clearly we ought not to be amusing ourselves, for then amusement would be the end of life. But if this is inconceivable, and yet amid serious occupations amusement is needed more than at other times (for he who is hard at work has need of relaxation, and amusement gives relaxation, whereas occupation is always accompanied with exertion and effort), at suitable times we should introduce amusements, and they should be our medicines, for the emotion which they create in the soul is a relaxation, and from the pleasure we obtain rest. Leisure of itself gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment of life, which are experienced, not by the busy man, but by those who have leisure. For he who is occupied has in view some end which he has not attained; but happiness is an end which all men deem to be accompanied with pleasure, and not with pain. This pleasure, however, is regarded differently by different persons, and varies according to the habit of individuals; the pleasure of the best man is the best, and springs from the noblest sources. It is clear, then, that there are branches of learning and education which we must study with a view to the enjoyment of leisure, and these are to be valued for their own sake; whereas those kinds of knowledge which are useful in business are to be deemed necessary, and exist for the sake of other things. And therefore our fathers admitted music into education, not on the ground either of its necessity or utility, for it is not necessary, nor indeed useful in the same manner as reading and writing, which are useful in money-making, in the management of a household, in the acquisition of knowledge, in political life, nor like drawing, useful for a more correct judgment of the works of artists, nor again like gymnastic, which gives health and strength; for neither of these is to be

gained from music. There remains, then, the use of music for intellectual enjoyment in leisure; which appears to have been the reason of its introduction, this being one of the ways in which it is thought that a freeman should pass his leisure."<sup>2</sup>

But the education of leisure is not exclusively devoted to the arts of the Muses, for Aristotle tells us that—

“with a like view [children] may be taught drawing, not to prevent their making mistakes in their own purchases, or in order that they may not be imposed upon in the buying or selling of articles, but rather because it makes them judges of the beauty of the human form. To be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls. Now it is clear that in education habit must go before reason, and the body before the mind; and therefore boys should be handed over to the trainer, who creates in them the proper habit of body, and to the wrestling-master, who teaches them their exercises.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus a distinction is drawn between the education of the soul and the education of the body—between the search for happiness through leisure, through what we may term an æsthetic attitude toward life, and the search for gain through practical occupation. Yet both these types of education—the practical and the theoretical, the ignoble and the noble—spring alike from a common matrix of human interest and a desire for expression through instinctive forms of behavior. When the end is practical it is less worthy because more highly contingent; yet from these same habits of action which we acquire through circumstance of need, there arise the higher qualities of theoretic reason and of intellectual beauty.

What, then, is the foundation of habit and memory, of bodily skill and graceful expression? In his explanation of the origin of poetry, Aristotle furnishes an answer to this question:—

“As to its general origin, we may say that Poetry has sprung from two causes, each of them a thing inherent in human nature. The first is the habit of imitation; for to imitate is instinctive with mankind; and man is superior to

<sup>2</sup> *Politics*, 8, 3, Jowett's translation.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 3.

the other animals, for one thing, in that he is the most imitative of creatures, and learns at first by imitation. Secondly, all men take a natural pleasure in the products of imitation—a pleasure to which the facts of experience bear witness; for even when the original objects are repulsive, as the most objectionable of the lower animals, or dead bodies, we still delight to contemplate their forms as represented with the utmost fidelity. [One is reminded of the corpse in Rembrandt's painting, 'The Lesson in Anatomy'.] The explanation of this delight lies in a further characteristic of our species, the appetite for learning; for among human pleasures that of learning is the keenest—not only to the scholarly, but to the rest of mankind as well, no matter how limited their capacity. Accordingly, the reason why men delight in a picture is that in the act of contemplating it they are acquiring knowledge and drawing inferences—as when they exclaim: 'Why, that is so and so!' Consequently, if one does not happen to have seen the original, any pleasure that arises from the picture will be due, not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, or the coloring, or some similar cause.

"To imitate, then, is natural in us as men; just as our sense of musical harmony and our sense of rhythm are natural—and it is to be noted that metre plainly falls under the general head of rhythm. In the beginning, therefore, being possessed of these natural endowments, men originated Poetry, the process of generation coming about by gradual and, in the main, slight advances upon the first naïve improvisations."<sup>4</sup>

From this it appears that poetry as a fine art, like every other human expression, originates in instinct; and Aristotle proceeds to distinguish two types of imitative instinct, to which he adds our sense of musical harmony and our sense of rhythm. Imitation for him is the universal mode of learning, and, although recent psychological study has made a ready acceptance of this view somewhat more difficult than it appears to Aristotle, yet, be it instinct or habit, the concept of imitation, as he understands it, is still valid in describing the general processes of assimilation and response. Whether or not the babe from birth is seized with a desire to model its behavior upon that of others, we may,

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<sup>4</sup> *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, translated by Lane Cooper, 1913, pp. 10-11.

therefore, leave aside from our discussion. What concerns us chiefly is the habits of communication and sympathetic rejoinder which characterize human kind; for it is through the generation of communicative response that human beings learn to know one another and to coöperate with one another in work and play.

These primitive modes of behavior achieve universality and become typical in the measure in which they satisfy some common need, the important aspects of which are twofold: first, that the expression be itself natural and not too difficult in performance; and, secondly, that its apprehension be readily received and assimilated by others to whom the communication is addressed. Genetically, we have first to do with expressions which are native in their general pattern or sequence, and which, through the frequent repetition that experience may be relied upon to motivate, will become ingrained as habit. The experience which thus fosters or neglects any native expression, embraces reaction both to the social and to the physical environment; and since, on the whole, the social environment is more varied in its possibilities of selection and rejection, the behavior of the infant is mainly reduced through social influence to certain kinds of action which it is enabled to enjoy. In infancy a faulty utterance or an awkward movement is quickly checked through social rejection or taboo, while the right word and the right act are readily selected under conditions which cause them to be received with pleasure.

But within this general tendency towards uniformity many subtle psychophysical relations are to be found among the movements, sounds, and visualizations that enter into both apprehension and expression. Here we are confronted with Aristotle's secondary instincts or "senses" of harmony and rhythm. In this connection harmony is understood as tonal, though not as harmonic in the modern meaning of the term; for the *harmonai* of the Greeks were melodic sequences, elaborate modes or scales of descending and ascending notes, the intervals of which in their special modal forms were by long usage associated with corresponding thoughts and actions. So Aristotle writes that—

“in rhythms and melodies we have the most realistic imitations of anger and mildness, as well as of courage, temperance, and their opposites”<sup>5</sup>

In their origin, at least, these melodies were vocal and thus accessory to poetry, for—

“when there are no words, [says Plato,] it is very difficult to recognize the meaning of harmony or rhythm, or to see that any worthy object is imitated by them.”<sup>6</sup>

Through constant association, however, melody itself achieves an ethical quality, even apart from words; hence the movements of rhythmical sound come to have a close resemblance to the movements of the soul.<sup>7</sup>

It is, then, by rhythm and melody that we achieve the most efficient, the most easily remembered, and the most delightful types of behavior; and not alone does the common meaningfulness of these forms stamp them as universal; but their inner configuration, the melody and rhythm of the very sound and movement, appeal to us as fit and right. Thus we enter into a manner of conduct which is not merely useful but also beautiful, and we may even extend our enjoyment and improve our intellectual leisure by the cultivation of modes of expression which have neither utility nor necessity, either for ourselves or for others.

This æsthetic aspect of education, so pronounced in the Greek emphasis upon music and gymnastic, is to-day a lost art, a lost method of instruction. So engrossed have we become in utilitarian aspects of life that æsthetic formulation is for the most part left to the *dilettante*, with at best a tolerant regard for his imbecilities. Yet the Greeks, closer to nature than we, prized for its intrinsic worth the gem we so lightly discard; for they recognized in it both a means and an end of education, and that the highest of all ends. Rooted in the ‘instincts’ of imitation, melody, and rhythm, the argument for an æsthetic method of education is thus based upon a propensity for learning

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<sup>5</sup> *Politics*, 8, 5; quoted by Butcher: *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> *Laws*, 2, 669, Jowett's trans.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Butcher, p. 132.



in balanced measures and proportions which makes for an efficiency of behavior, and that delight the contemplation of which furnishes our leisure with the highest gifts of intellectual solace.

The forms of experience that have thus crystallized into tradition take on a lively interest, because, in so far as they are the outcome of native disposition, they can never relinquish that touch of spontaneity which characterizes instinctive desire. It is not alone the *products* of past endeavor and the genius of the race with which the young are made familiar by recourse to the ancient legends, but the useful, beautiful expressions themselves in which the legends are recorded. Being reënacted by each succeeding generation under a tutelage which emphasizes form as an integral part of their content, these traditional expressions satisfy a human craving for the fulfilment of vague desires. Hence it is that Aristotle refers to such amusements as our 'medicines'.

But instruction embraces not only music with its combined words, sounds, and rhythms. Gymnastic or bodily movement is likewise a means and an end to an efficient and joyous existence. "No doubt," writes Plato,—

"a careful training in gymnastic, as well as in music, ought to begin with their childhood, and go on through all their life. But the following is the true view of the case, in my opinion; see what you think of it. My belief is, not that a good body will by its own excellence make the soul good; but, on the contrary, that a good soul will by its excellence render the body as perfect as it can be."<sup>8</sup>

And again:—

"If . . . the accomplished student of music follow this same track in the pursuit of gymnastic, may he not, if he pleases, so far succeed as to be independent of the medical art except in extreme cases?' . . . 'I think he may.'"<sup>9</sup>

Health and efficiency, as well as beauty and goodness, are thus combined in the programme of a musical and gymnastic education; but the combination must be intimate, for each pair is reflected equally in the soul of the individual.

<sup>8</sup> *Republic*, 3, 403; Davies and Vaughan's translation.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 410.

There remain, however, certain practical evils to be guarded against and overcome; for—

“those who have devoted themselves to gymnastic exclusively become ruder than they ought to be; while those who have devoted themselves to music are made softer than is good for them.” . . . <sup>10</sup> “To correct . . . these two exclusive temperaments, the spirited and the philosophic, some god, as I for my part shall maintain, has given to men two arts, music and gymnastic, not for soul and body distinctively, except in a secondary way, but expressly for those two temperaments, in order that by the increase or relaxation of the tension to the due pitch they may be brought into mutual accord.” <sup>11</sup>

The common factor of a just rhythm which underlies bodily movement, on the one hand, and all linguistic, musical, and imaginal expression on the other, is thus the foundation of an educational system embracing all skills and dexterities of performance, and likewise all movements of thought and communicative expression.

Great care, to be sure, must be exercised to select and inculcate the rhythms that constitute the style of virtuous rather than of vicious men; for the evil of false models impressed both Plato and Aristotle as one that must be met with firm measures of restraint. The decadence manifest to both philosophers in the softening influence of an aristocratic luxury caused them to inveigh against professionalism in art, and against the insidious effects of ultra-refinement in the treatment of baser models of rhythm and harmony. Likewise Aristophanes in the *Clouds* causes one of his characters to remark of the earlier restraint exercised by masters upon their pupils that—

“If any of them were to play the buffoon, or turn any quavers like these difficult turns the present artists make after the manner of Phrynus, he used to be thrashed, being beaten by many blows, as banishing the Muses.” <sup>12</sup>

As an example of a conservatism worthy of emulation, Plato, in the *Laws*, refers to the practice of the Egyptians:—

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 412.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 412.

<sup>12</sup> Hickie's trans., 1853. I, p. 157.

"And you will find that their works of art are painted or moulded in the same forms which they had ten thousand years ago; this is literally true, and no exaggeration; their ancient paintings and sculpture are not a whit better or worse than the work of to-day, but are made with just the same skill.

"How extraordinary!

"I should rather say how statesmanlike, how worthy of a legislator! I know that other things in Egypt are not so well. But what I am telling you about music is true and deserving of consideration, because showing that a lawgiver may institute melodies which have a natural truth and correctness without any fear of failure."<sup>13</sup>

Precise directions are given by both Plato and Aristotle as to which musical and poetic modes and rhythms should be conserved, and which should be repressed. In general, it is the more ancient and approved forms that are favored; their ancient origin being a sufficient guarantee of their validity. Having fixed upon the best forms of education for life, says Plato,—

"let our decree be as follows. No one in singing or dancing shall offend against public and consecrated models, and the general fashion among the youth, any more than he would offend against any other law."<sup>14</sup>

In extenuation of such a decree we may read in the *Republic* that—

"Good and bad rhythm are, by a process of assimilation, results of a good style and its opposite respectively; and the same may be said of good and bad harmony; that is to say, if rhythm and harmony are to suit themselves to the words, as was asserted just now, and not the words to them."<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, good language, good harmony and grace, and good rhythm, all depend upon a good nature—a sound moral character:—

"And such qualities . . . enter largely into painting and all similar workmanship, into weaving and embroidery, into architecture, as well as the whole manufacture of utensils in general—nay, into the constitution of living bodies, and of

<sup>13</sup> *Laws*, 2, 656.

<sup>15</sup> *Republic*, 3, 400.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 800.

all plants: for in all these things gracefulness or ungracefulness finds place. And the absence of grace, and rhythm, and harmony, is closely allied to an evil style, and an evil character; whereas their presence is allied to, and expressive of, the opposite character, which is brave and sober-minded.”<sup>16</sup>

. . . “Is it then, Glaucon, on these accounts that we attach such supreme importance to a musical education, because rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the recesses of the soul, and take most powerful hold of it, bringing gracefulness in their train, and making a man graceful if he be rightly nurtured, but if not, the reverse? And also because he that has been duly nurtured therein will have the keenest eye for defects, whether in the failures of art, or the misgrowths of nature; and feeling a most just disdain for them, will commend beautiful objects and gladly receive them into his soul, and feed upon them, and grow to be noble and good, whereas he will rightly censure and hate all repulsive objects, even in his childhood, before he is able to be reasoned with; and when reason comes *he* will welcome her most cordially who can recognize her by the instinct of relationship, and because he has been thus nurtured?

“I have no doubt, he said, that such are the reasons for a musical education.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus by rhythmic and harmonic forms which have commended themselves to our forebears do we enter into our cultural heritage. But poetry, song, and dance are not merely a means of acquiring information and the ways of worthy action; their formal patterns have also an intrinsic worth lending to the vehicle of knowledge its stylistic grace and efficiency. With regard to the alphabet Plato makes the following illuminating observation:—

“You know, I continued, that in learning to read we were considered tolerably perfect, as soon as we could be sure of recognizing the few letters there are, scattered about in all existing words, and that we never treated them with disrespect in either a small word or a great, as if it did not signify to notice them, but were anxious to distinguish them everywhere, believing that we should be no scholars till we were thus qualified.

“True.

“Is it not also true that we shall not know the *images* of letters, as reflected either in still water or in a mirror, until we

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 3, 401.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 3, 402.

know the letters themselves, because the knowledge of both the reflections and the originals belongs to the same art and study?

"It is perfectly true."<sup>18</sup>

This ability of a child to observe details of form, apart from an associative context, is a matter of no small importance. We see it evinced in the attention children give not only to their letters, but also to the forms and patterns of objects. And, as Plato remarks, the reversal of the image need not confuse them as it is likely to do with an adult, for whom the context has itself become a complex and invariable attendant. As children come, at the age of two or three years, to distinguish objects in pictures, it is of no great moment that the picture be seen right-side up. If the form is recognized at all, it is often distinguished quite as readily bottom-side up, because its relations to other objects in the picture go unobserved—the important thing being the self-contained form, the mass and contour of the object.

"Tell me, then, I pray you, to pass from my illustration to the things illustrated, shall we in like manner never become truly musical, neither ourselves, nor the guardians whom we say we are to instruct, until we know the essential forms of temperance and courage and liberality and munificence, and all that are akin to these, and their opposites also, wherever they are scattered about, and discern them wherever they are to be found, themselves and their images, never slighting them either in small things or in great, but believing the knowledge of the forms and of their images to belong to the same art and study?

"It must inevitably be so.

"Surely, then, to him who has an eye to see, there can be no fairer spectacle than that of a man who combines the possession of moral beauty in his soul with outward beauty of form corresponding and harmonizing with the former, because the same great pattern enters into both."<sup>19</sup>

It will readily be seen from this doctrine that education in music and gymnastic forms the basis of a unified and harmonious life, the final outcome of which is achieved in expressions of character by word of mouth, by tonal harmony, and by appropriate

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 402.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 402.

and rhythmic gesture. It is this combined art that the Greeks termed *choric*; and, as Plato tells us in the *Laws*,—

“choric movements are imitations of manners occurring in various actions, fortunes, dispositions; each particular is imitated, and those to whom the words, or songs, or dances are suited, either by nature or habit or both, cannot help feeling pleasure in them and applauding them, and calling them beautiful.”<sup>20</sup>

In Book VII of the *Laws* Plato summarizes his conception of education in the following words:—

“Education has two branches—one of gymnastic, which is concerned with the body, and the other of music, which is designed for the improvement of the soul. And gymnastic has also two branches—dancing and wrestling; and one sort of dancing imitates musical recitation, and aims at preserving dignity and freedom; the other aims at producing health, agility, and beauty in the limbs and parts of the body, giving the proper flexion and extension to each of them, a harmonious motion being diffused everywhere, and joining a suitable accompaniment to the dance.”<sup>21</sup>

We see that these two branches of education are closely inter-related because of their common element of rhythm. Since rhythmic expression is in the first instance but an efficient mode of imitation, there is always a definite content of meaning as well as a precise form of expression. Thus we learn about things through the appropriate behavior, while enjoying the process in the measure of its rhythmic fitness as a means to an end. Our difficulty in comprehending such an art and method is that for us the expressive forms of speech and writing, music, and drawing, and of dancing and gymnastic, have become in each case a specialized art. Our poets may have but little music in their natures. Our painters may be illiterate. Our musicians may be powerless to express themselves in graceful or effective gesture. As for the gymnast, his sense of rhythm may be most elementary, while in the arts of poetry, music, and drawing he has neither skill nor understanding.

In marked contrast to the moderns, the ancient poets were called *orchestic*, Butcher tells us, “not only because they trained

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<sup>20</sup> *Laws*, 2, 655.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 795.

their choruses, but also because they taught choral dances outside the theatre to such as wished to learn them".<sup>22</sup> In classical times the poet was both a musician and dancer. "So reputable and so wise a thing was dancing," says Athenæus, "that Pindar calls Apollo dancer."<sup>23</sup>

Not only is this unification of the arts of expression the reason why the Greeks gained the reputation of an artistic people who touched with the hand of genius all they undertook, leaving their varied products as models for all time; it likewise indicates the method of an education that most highly commends itself to our day. Yet, however difficult it may be to retrieve this simple and intuitive guidance of the young in ways of expression most natural to their being, the mode is not less innate to us than it was to the Greeks. Accordingly, in advocating such a doctrine in the teaching of children, we are merely advocating a greater sympathy for and understanding of the unspoiled nature of the child. Instead of imposing upon him methods of drill and study that have been formalized into mechanical tasks set only with reference to those ends which we, his teachers, regard as useful, we should seek to enter spiritually into the life of the child, and come to understand the amusement and the zest of a spontaneous expression. We may then gradually realize that a child's progress in education is more often attained *despite* our clumsy efforts, than *because* of them. The very fact that the plan of education is usually laid with reference to the child's future tends to lessen its validity; for with so scant a knowledge of the practices of adult life, how can he be expected to enter into a scheme of instruction devised with the aid of a reasoning that is quite beyond him? Without a special regard for the intrinsic nature of the child, any method of education must inevitably be false and wooden—mechanical in form and lacking in natural appeal.

It was not the Greeks who knew too much: it is we ourselves; for, with them, erudition yielded to intuition, and while Plato and Aristotle commend the old forms of instruction and decry the new, they do so in the faith that the older forms possess the

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>23</sup> *Athen.*, I, 40.

tried merits which accrue in a natural evolution. Ancient modes of expression are valid means of engaging the child's participative interest, because they make a constant appeal to his instinctive desires. Thus enjoyment is constantly present, while the training which ensues is still flexible enough to enrich his experience and to widen his horizon.

Although the choric art, of we have been speaking, lived on into the Roman period, it gradually lost its significance as a method of education, retaining only its place in the art of the drama, and in the pantomime. Lucian, in his dialogue, *Of Pantomime*, thus defends the art in an age when specialization was already well advanced:—

“Other entertainments of eye or ear are but manifestations of a single art; 't is flute or lyre or song; 't is moving tragedy or laughable comedy. The pantomime is all-embracing in the variety of his equipment: flute and pipe, beating foot and clashing cymbal, melodious recitative, choral harmony. Other arts call out only one half of man's powers—the bodily or the mental: the pantomime combines the two. His performance is as much an intellectual as a physical exercise: there is meaning in his movements; every gesture has its significance; and therein lies his chief excellence.”<sup>24</sup>

Lucian realized, however, the educative value of this combined artistic expression, for he remarks that—

“the enlightened Lesbos of Mytilene called pantomimes ‘manual philosophers’, and used to frequent the theatre, in the conviction that he came out of it a better man than when he went in.”<sup>25</sup> [Also that] “all professions hold out some object, either of utility or of pleasure. Pantomime is the only one that secures both these objects; now the utility that is combined with pleasure is doubled in value.”<sup>26</sup>

“Consider, then, the universality of this art: it sharpens the wits, it exercises the body, it delights the spectator, it instructs him in the history of bygone days, while eye and ear are held beneath the spell of flute and cymbal and of graceful dance. Would you revel in sweet song? Nowhere can you procure the enjoyment in greater variety and perfection. Would you listen to clear melody of flute and

<sup>24</sup> Lucian: *Dialogues*, Fowler's translation, 2, 68.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 69.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 71.



pipe? Again the pantomime supplies you. I say nothing of the excellent moral influence of public opinion, as exercised in the theatre, where you will find the evil-doer greeted with execration, and his victim with sympathetic tears. The pantomime's most admirable quality I have yet to mention—his combination of strength and suppleness of limb; it is as if brawny Hercules and soft Aphrodite were presented to us in one and the same person."<sup>27</sup>

But although Lucian can praise the excellence of the pantomimic art, and will defend its exhibition in the theatre, it is evident that the notion of a choric education is not in his mind, but only the professional equipment of a valued entertainer. Although the educative influence of rhythm may still be exerted in the theatre by capable performers, it is no longer a method to be practised generally with children.

A conception of this art still survived in the late Renaissance, as may be seen in Sir John Davies's poem *Orchestra* (1596), from which the following stanzas are quoted:—

"These arts of speach, the guids and marshals are ;  
But Logick leadeth Reason in a daunce :  
(Reason the cynosure and bright load-star,  
In this World's sea t' auoid the rock of Chaunce.)  
For with close following and continuance  
One reason doth another so ensue,  
As in conclusion still the daunce is true.

"So Musicke to her owne sweet tunes doth trip  
With tricks of 3, 5, 8, 15, and more ;  
So doth the Art of Numbering seeme to skip  
From eu'n to odd in her proportion'd score :  
So doe those skils, whose quick eyes doe explore  
The iust dimension both of Earth and Heau'n,  
In all their rules obserue a measure eu'n.

"Loe this is Dauncing's true nobilitie,  
Dauncing, the child of Musicke and of Loue ;  
Dauncing it selfe, both Loue and harmony,  
Where all agree, and all in order moue,  
Dauncing, the Art that all Arts doe approue ;  
The faire character of the World's consent,  
The Heau'ns true figure and th' Earth's ornament!"<sup>28</sup>

It remained, however, for a present-day teacher of music to retrieve the method, and re-introduce it as an appropriate scheme of education. This man is Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, a Swiss mu-

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 72.

<sup>28</sup> Stanzas 94-96.

sician who, in his teaching of harmony at the Geneva Conservatory of Music, realized first how poorly equipped were his pupils in the simplest modes of rhythmical expression, and then attempted to correct this deficiency by the introduction of "gesture-songs" which he composed for the purpose. From a small beginning in the eighteen-nineties, Dalcroze proceeded until he has at length achieved a systematic method of rhythmic-gymnastic, linked with music, and issuing in a capacity for improvisation, both musical and gestural, which promises a significant enlargement in the scope of musical art. Recognizing that the tonal art is secondary to movement, since in rhythmic motion we have a more original expression, he has set about training his pupils in a variety of rhythmic forms in which the body, legs, and arms all participate to the accompaniment of music that lends diversity and emphasis to the whole. Since the development of harmony following upon the epoch-making compositions of Beethoven, no corresponding development of rhythm has taken place. Instead, it is but the simplest of rhythmic patterns in which harmonies of tone are still set. To supply this deficiency by enlarging the musical art, and also to improve the condition of physical education by enriching its supply of musical and rhythmic patterns,—these have been the objects of Dalcroze's innovations.

Perhaps his most striking achievement is the development of a sense for continuity in rhythmic behavior; for, although all movement tends to be rhythmic, it is so only in jerky and spasmodic periods. Dalcroze's discovery of this defect in modern choreography is described by him as follows:—

"It was at a performance of Debussy's moving *Après midi d'une Faune* a few years ago. A procession of nymphs slowly moved on to the stage, pausing every eight or twelve steps to show the admiring spectators beautiful attitudes copied from Greek vases. But continuing their walk in the last attitude assumed, they attacked the next attitude—at a moment of the fresh pause in walking—without any *preparatory movement*, thus giving a jagged impression that would be given in the cinema by a series of movements in which essential films had been suppressed. Then I understood that what shocked one was the lack of connec-

tion, of sequence in the attitudes, the absence of that *continued* movement which should be noticeable in every expression of life animated by a continued thought. The exquisite attitudes of the Greek nymphs followed each other without being connected by an activity of a really human nature."<sup>29</sup>

By supplying continuity of movement both beauty and efficiency are greatly enhanced; for, although behavior is always periodic—whether it be that of the smooth muscles or of the striped, whether of heart and vaso-motor systems, digestive and laryngeal systems, or overt responses of the limbs, head, and trunk—efficiency of skill and grace consists in the even articulation of those varied responses into an effective combination of continuous and unimpaired motion. As Dalcroze has written with regard to his own method of instruction:—

“Unsteady time when singing or playing, confusion in playing, inability to follow when accompanying, accentuating too roughly or with lack of precision, all these faults have their origin in the child’s muscular and nervous control, in lack of coördination between the mind which conceives, the brain which orders, the nerve which transmits, and the muscle which executes.<sup>30</sup> . . . The object of the method is, in the first instance, to create by the help of rhythm a rapid and regular current of communication between brain and body; and what differentiates my physical exercises from those of present-day methods of muscular development is that each of them is conceived in the form which can most quickly establish in the brain the image of the movement studied.”<sup>31</sup>

In realizing his aims the whole psychophysical organism is constantly employed; hence muscular experience in rhythmical patterns is taught in connection with visual, auditory, and imaginal accompaniment. In order both to realize the possibilities of movement to the fullest extent, and also to provide a ready means of transition from one rhythm to another, the measures are expanded to include those of five, seven, nine, and eleven beats, as well as the more usual measures of two, four, six, eight, and twelve.

<sup>29</sup> *The Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze*, 1917, p. 24.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

But the complication of rhythms does not cease here. A "plastic counterpoint" is likewise taught, in which the two arms, the feet, and the body are trained to perform independent rhythms over against one another. In this the basic time is usually beaten by movements of the arms, while feet and body express time-values or the duration of notes. Thus one step, or spatial progression, is allowed for each note in the musical accompaniment, but at the same time the value of this note is analyzed and expressed by a variety of movements, such as knee-bends and bodily gestures, without progression. In the more complicated patterns the pupil is instructed to beat two different times simultaneously with the two arms, such as  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{4}{4}$ , while the feet execute a progressive movement five steps to the measure.

Such an interplay of different rhythms coördinated in a single period of time is indicative of a high degree of bodily control. The ease of transition from one activity to another likewise facilitates the command which an individual can exercise over his body in the multifarious responses of life. In cultivating such a control, grace and poise are linked with efficiency; and the true balance of a precise rhythm, capable of easy transition into other rhythms of response without lost motion, is the secret of all skilful performance.

That the Greeks knew and employed these methods of diverse rhythm is at least suggested by Plato's reference to Damon, whom he proposes to call upon for counsel as to the question "which kinds of rhythm express which kinds of life". Although professing to be himself no authority on the subject, Plato continues as follows:—

"I fancy that I have heard him indistinctly alluding to a certain complex warlike rhythm, and another that was dactylic, and a third heroic,—arranging them I know not how, and showing that the rise and fall of each foot balance one another, by resolving them into short and long syllables; and he gave the name *iambus* to a certain foot, if I am not wrong, and *trochee* to another, affixing to them long and short marks. And in some of these, I think, he would blame or praise the march of the foot no less than the rhythm, or perhaps the two taken together." <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Republic*, 3, 400.

In the Dalcroze system of Eurhythmics, the vocal and verbal elements are apparently neglected, nor are the rhythmic patterns themselves so directly imitative "of the style of the virtuous man" as Plato asserts they should be. This is, of course, a result of modern specialization and of the remoteness of the art of conduct from its original prototype, instinctive behavior. Difficult as it would be to recover the simplicity of life and naïveté of attitude so readily assumed by the Greeks, an eurhythmic method of education is still possible and desirable; one that would embrace not only bodily gesture set to music, but vocalizations in speech and song, and likewise all the varied arts of construction,—drawing, painting, modelling, sewing, weaving, and manual training. Indeed, the failure of these latter subjects to prove educative, in the general sense intended by their introduction in kindergarten and primary grades, is chiefly owing to the detached character of the several activities, and to the lack of emphasis upon suitable rhythms in their performance, the rhythmic aspect of both verbal and graphic arts being too often underestimated or entirely neglected. Yet style in speech, as well as style in movement of the body, has its origin in felt rhythms that control and regulate vocal utterance. Similarly, handwriting, drawing, painting, and all forms of manual dexterity, involve a manifold of rhythms, the perfect articulation and continuity of which proclaim the technical efficiency of the expert. Even the related forms of proportion and symmetry, as they are expressed in picture and statue, are not lacking in rhythmical aspects; for, although the design of a picture be fixed and unchanging, its appeal is made to an understanding that is essentially dynamic. The eye roves over the surface of the canvas, and the attention is engaged by a succession of ocular movements to which the body responds with imitative demeanor, and an emotional accompaniment involving both organic and muscular adjustments. No moment of life is ever static, and it is even doubtful if symmetry and proportion have any other origin than that of rhythmical adjustments appropriate to their apprehension.

Thus Eurhythmic is a fundamental law of thought and perception, of impression and response,—whatever be the materials, and however they are presented to the mind. In advocating

the eurhythmic method we are but directing attention to an underlying mode of life which is always operative and essential. Teachers are not called upon to implant a new form of thought and behavior, but only to direct and elaborate one that is already present. Above all, it is their function to assist in providing means of ready transition between diverse and at times simultaneous occupations, to the end that these activities may become at once efficient in accomplishment and enjoyable in experience; for economy of movement, whether in the perception of a fixed object or in its actual manipulation, is but a result of a rhythmical ability that conforms to the needs of occasion. This conformity of means to ends develops a certain pleasure and exhilaration of spirit more satisfying, perhaps, than any other good that life can afford.

Such a pleasure and such an efficiency can never be had from a stereotyped response, because in its very nature habit is unintelligent and unaffecting. Only in those moments of life that touch our primal nature, and that arouse our desires and whet our appetites, are we truly alive and intelligently receptive. Yet the participation of emotion is not of itself an unmixed good, for sheer emotion is chaotic, and its ultimate effect is exhaustion or even death. Through the balanced and well-ordered expressions of instinctive nature, however, we may be roused from lethargy to a vivid participation, in which the emotion attending all our desires and deeper needs finds appropriate expression in a well-balanced and a well-proportioned rhythmical response. Continuity of expression without let or hindrance characterizes our best and most intelligent work; for it is then that we find the appropriate means to our ends as each new aspect of the ever-changing scene develops under our eyes. We are so fashioned that in these moments we most truly live; for being vitally concerned in all that occurs, and possessing the adequate instrument of a trained body, we are able to realize through our expressions the enjoyment of life.

The cultivation of a good style is, therefore, the basis of all education, and it is precisely in the years of childhood, before behavior has been too far spoiled by habit, that style is most amenable to training. The faulty style that characterizes

most of our conduct is chiefly a result of specialization begun too early. Led by our teachers into mechanical habits that are a product of adult rationalization, we fail to follow the natural evolution of our instinctive modes of behavior. If, then, we study the native bent of the child and guide his expression in a continuous rhythm without artificial restrictions, we shall be laying a permanent foundation for his career, by affording him a general discipline of mind and body which escapes the critical strictures of the modern iconoclast. For the method is both 'behavioristic' and 'specific' enough to meet the demands of the extreme realist, while the rhythmical forms cultivated are generally applicable to every mode of expression, whatever its purport. In reading, in writing, in spelling, in numbering, in the most varied compositions, in gymnastic, and in manual construction—in all these, rhythms are constantly present and constantly requisite. All that is needed to give them a general and disciplinary importance of the highest 'transfer-value' is to pay some attention to the configurations of thought and action, and to train the pupil to make an easy transition from one occupation which involves one rhythm to others involving different rhythms.

Complete though the programme may be, it is not easy of fulfilment; for, in order to instruct in the use of rhythms one must oneself be rhythmical; in order to imitate the virtuous, the pupil must be encouraged to recognize models of virtue. In his system of rhythmic gymnastics, Dalcroze divides his method into three parts: rhythmic movement, ear-training, and improvisation. The last is not required of all pupils, but is, he tells us, indispensable to the teacher. A significant point! for it is indispensable that all teachers of the young should be able to improvise, not alone in music, as Dalcroze counsels, but in every other art of expression. Ability of improvisation in this broader sense means a certain freshness and initiative in the practice of new forms of behavior in meeting new situations; for to improvise is not merely to ring the changes on a few hackneyed forms, but to be alive to changing conditions, to be discerning and resourceful, to know, and to be able to realize, the most varied modes of response, by word, by gesture, and by concrete performance.

The ideal teacher is, therefore, both a model and a source of information; in action and in precept he is perfect. As Lucian says of his dancer:—

“The fact is, the pantomime must be completely armed at every point. His work must be one harmonious whole, perfect in balance and proportion, self-consistent, proof against the most minute criticism; there must be no flaws, everything must be of the best; brilliant conceptions, profound learning—above all, human sympathy. When every one of the spectators identifies himself with the scene enacted, when each sees in the performance as in a mirror the reflection of his own conduct and feelings, then, and not till then, is his success complete. But let him reach that point, and the enthusiasm of the spectators becomes uncontrollable, every man pouring out his whole soul in admiration of the portraiture that reveals him to himself. Such a spectacle is no less than a fulfillment of the oracular injunction, ‘Know Thyself’. Men depart from it with increased knowledge; they have learnt something that is to be sought after, something that should be eschewed.”<sup>33</sup>

If this ideal is not easy of attainment, greater understanding and sympathy may yet improve both the method and the attitude of teachers; for if the argument be sound, that learning is essentially a rhythmical process, should we not endeavor to make it eurhythmic as well? It is often said, and few will doubt, that the true teacher is an artist; and, if an art cannot be taught, training in the art of teaching is futile. But if rhythm is a fundamental law of intelligent behavior, then all of us are potentially artists, and the measure of our varied achievements is at once the measure of our artistic ability. Just as M. Dalcroze has been successful in developing the rhythmic possibilities of the child's expression to a much higher degree than has hitherto been done in modern times, so he has developed a method adaptable to a similar occasion by other teachers. And even though the best of teachers are those who have cultivated their rhythmic sense since childhood, and have retained that eager impressibility which appreciatively discerns the form as well as the content of a study, yet we may also hope to do something for those whose fortune

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<sup>33</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.*, 2, 81.



or talent has been less, and at least to bring them to a realization of the enjoyment of expression, imperfect though that enjoyment may be.

In course of time, as we improved our stock of pupils through more adequate methods of early instruction, we should also increase the number of artists whose special genius it is to instruct the young of future generations. *Ars longa, vita brevis*. Let this not discourage us, however, for at its best life is complex and tentative, and its greatest achievements are but episodic. We need not expect by any sudden innovation to displace the awkward, graceless inefficiency which marks most of our efforts, and to substitute therefor the beautiful style of a continuous and perfect rhythm. But some improvement is always possible, and brings in its wake greater enjoyment coupled with greater efficiency. Is this not the thing most to be desired, the thing at which education is continually aiming?

The principle upon which Eurhythmic rests is neither the fraudulent, though sometimes pious, assertion that "nature is always right", nor yet the inelastic and opposite statement that nature is always wrong; but it is the very sensible and cogent principle that nature regulates the course of life and behavior, and that the fitness of environment and the fitness of organism work out their mutual adjustments in orderly and rhythmical patterns. Hence it follows that the greater the degree of orderliness, the greater will be the efficiency of adjustment. Less lost motion, more enjoyment: this is the simple and practicable precept of an æsthetic method of education.

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